maintenance of nucleus and breeder seeds, plant protection measures including IPM demonstration, supply of sprayers, pheromone traps, bio-agents as well as water saving devices like sprinklers and drip irrigation system. These developmental and extension activities have benefited farmers through increased production, productivity and reduced cost of cultivation through control of insects and pests.

(d) Government have taken several steps to provide relief to the farmers. The banks have been advised to reschedule/restructure the debt of farmers in distress and in arrears, grant one time settlement facility for setting overdue loans of small and marginal farmers and to advance loans to the farmers for repaying the loans taken from non-institutional sources. The farmers are also protected against natural calamities through National Agricultural Insurance Scheme. Further, to protect the interest of the cotton growers, Government of India announces Minimum Support Price (MSP) of cotton every year and whenever the market prices of Kapas touch the Minimum Support Price level, the Cotton Corporation of India in the Ministry of Textiles undertakes Support Price Operation and purchases Kapas without any quantitative limit. In addition, Government of India have also authorized the National Agricultural Cooperation Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) in 2004-05 to procure cotton at Minimum Support Price.

Target for foodgrain production

†1276. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to double the production of foodgrains in the country by the end of Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard and the names of the foodgrains alongwith their respective targeted production by the end of the Plan;

(c) whether any annual increase rate has also been fixed right now in order to achieve the target of this production; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal to double the production of foodgrains in the country by the end of Eleventh Five Year Plan.

(b) to (d) Question do not arise.

Assistance to Fishermen

1277. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fishermen and the population with fish as a main food;

(b) the number of fishermen who have been provided with the modest fishing equipments;

(c) the number of training programmes organised to train fishermen; and

(d) the number of beneficiaries from such programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The population of fishermen is 14.45 million and fish eaters' population constitutes around 56% of the total population in the country.

(b) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Fisheries Training and Extension is in operation in all the States/UTs with the objective to upgrade the skills of fish farmers/fishers, has no provision to provide fishing equipments to the Fishers. However, central assistance of Rs. 510.00 lakh has been extended to various States/UTs for providing 4324 Outboard Motors to the fishermen using traditional fishing craft under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post Harvest Operations" during the period 2002-03 to 2004-05.

(c) and (d) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Fisheries Training and Extension, total 183 training programmes were sanctioned and 10415 fishers have been trained during the last three years (2002-03 to 2004-05).